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Ashley Klair Burke

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Textbook Alternatives: Faculty Approaches to Reducing Student Costs for Required Course Materials

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at Syracuse University

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and Renée Crown University Honors
May 2014

Honors Capstone Project in Policy Studies

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Date: April 7, 2014

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Abstract

American undergraduates spend approximately \$600 per semester on required course materials, most of which are traditional textbooks. This study examines the high textbook costs placed on students and the factors contributing to cost increases. Textbook prices have increased more than twice the rate of inflation, approximately 6 percent per year since 1986. The textbook market is unlike many other economic markets within the United States, as instructors set the demand and students make the purchases.

A review of over 128 articles on textbook costs and alternatives provide information for this study. In particular, 16 studies evaluating textbook costs and alternatives provide background information for this report. In addition, the personal experiences of the author and Syracuse University students provide a student perspective of traditional textbook use. For anecdotal evidence, unstructured interviews were conducted with Syracuse University professors.

While students do not choose which textbooks they must purchase, they have several options that can reduce the cost. Course instructors have the most influence over textbook demand and thus are the key player in reducing student textbook costs. There are many alternative textbook options instructors can adopt to replace traditional textbooks and reduce student costs. This report provides instructors a resource to identify textbook alternatives best suited for their instructional style. Both print-based and electronic-based materials are considered as textbook alternatives within this study.

Syracuse University students feel that their textbook costs are unnecessarily high. Faculty can reduce student textbook costs by eliminating traditional textbooks. The cost-savings approaches of adopting open textbooks and making course materials accessible online provide students the most relief while maintaining a quality reference material. Syracuse University instructors should consider adopting these alternative approaches to reduce student costs.

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**Textbook Alternatives: Faculty Approaches to Reducing Student Costs for
Required Course Materials
Syracuse University Renée Crown University Honors Program
By Ashley Burke
April 2014**

Executive Summary

In addition to high tuition rates, American undergraduates face high textbook costs. Students will spend approximately \$1,200 on required course materials in the 2013-14 academic year. The purpose of this study is to recognize the high cost of textbook, determine the factors contributing to the rising cost, and examine alternatives that faculty can adopt to reduce student textbook costs. This report serves as a resource for students and faculty to make informed decisions over textbook purchases and textbook assignment respectively.

To determine approaches to reduce student textbook costs, over 128 articles were collected from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and the ProQuest database. In particular, 16 studies created a foundation for this report, providing information on the high textbook cost, the factors influencing the rising cost, and identifying specific cost-reducing approaches. In addition personal experience by the author and Syracuse University students provided a student perspective for this report. For anecdotal evidence, informal interviews with Syracuse University professors were conducted.

Choices that students make have a limited ability to effectively reduce textbook costs. They impact the individual and not a large population of students. To reduce textbook costs for the maximum number of students, this study focuses

on faculty options to reduce student costs. Decisions for required course materials by faculty determine the textbook market demand. Therefore, instructors are key players in reducing student textbook costs.

In addition to traditional textbooks, there are many alternatives that faculty can use for their courses that will reduce student costs. When considering textbook alternatives, it is important to evaluate not only student costs, but quality, long-term sustainability, and ease of instructor implementation as well. *Print materials* refers to works purchased as a physically printed-paper resource, while *electronic materials* refers to resources originally accessed digitally.

Studies of student preference indicate that students prefer the use of printed materials. Four alternative approaches to traditional textbook use remain in print format. 1.) Customized textbooks allow instructors to tailor a specific textbook to their curriculum. 2.) Course readers enable instructors to gather course readings together in one bound resource. 3.) Instructors can also maximize student use of a particular textbook by collaborating with other instructors in their disciplinary. 4.) No-frills/value editions contain similar content at a reduced cost by reducing features such as color, graphics, and binding from the textbook.

Technological advancements in education provide electronic-based approaches. Students have the skills and ability to access material online anytime through smartphones, e-readers, and laptops. Electronic materials eliminate the production and shipping costs associated with traditional textbooks. Instructors can post material on websites, learning management systems, or send through email allowing students to access all course material digitally. Open textbooks are

textbooks created under a creative commons copyright license that allow for the public to freely view the material. Instructors can create their own open textbooks for student to use that are specifically designed for their curriculum. Several universities have already established an open textbook development program.

The goal of this study is to encourage Syracuse University instructors to review and begin implementing textbook alternatives to reduce student costs. Negative student sentiment of textbook costs and the availability of alternative textbook options indicate that instructors should refrain from using traditional textbooks as much as possible. This study provides instructors and students with resources to reduce textbooks costs. Implementation of textbook alternatives recommended in this report as required course material will achieve this goal.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank William Coplin for being my Capstone advisor and assisting me with this project. I could not have completed this project without your encouragement, albeit unconventional at times. Over the past four years, I have learned more than I ever expected from this major. I cannot thank you enough for every opportunity and piece of advice that you have given me.

I would also like to thank Carol Dwyer for her support as my Honors Reader. I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with you. Carol you are a wealth of knowledge, thank you for providing me feedback to improve this project.

Thank you to the Renée Crown University Honors Program for providing me the opportunity to work on this project, especially Eric Holtzwarth and Henry Jankiewicz.

To my friends, thank you for all of your support and positivity. In particular, thank you Rachel Greene and Olivia Parsons, you both went above and beyond for me while I was working on this project.

Finally, I would like to thank my mother and father. Thank you so much for believing in me. I could not be who I am today without you. Dad, from an early age you've always been there to foster my research ambition. Mom, your encouragement and belief in me have been a guiding light these past 21 years.

Thank you again everyone.

Advice to Future Honors Students

“It always seems impossible until it’s done.” – Nelson Mandela

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PASSION. COURAGE. DEDICATION

Introduction

In addition to high tuition rates, American undergraduates face high textbook costs. The College Board reports that the average student will spend \$1,200 on textbooks in the 2012-13 academic year. The purpose of this study is to document the high cost of textbooks and discuss factors contributing to rising costs. This study discusses how students may alleviate some of the cost by choosing when, where, and in what format to purchase materials. The study outlines faculty options for required course materials in both print and electronic format. In addition, it suggests ways in which Syracuse University faculty can reduce the cost of textbooks to students by applying alternative textbook approaches.

In this paper, the term, “required course material” refers to materials assigned by an instructor that students are expected to use for the successful completion of their coursework. “Traditional textbooks” refers to a book, printed and bound by a publisher, for use in the study of a subject. “Open textbooks” refers to textbooks created and released under an open source copyright, allowing for free digital access and customization.

Chapter 1:

Methodology

The researcher conducted a study of alternative textbook approaches used to reduce the student textbook costs throughout the United States. Sixteen previous studies were analyzed to provide background information on textbook costs, the sources of that cost, and textbook alternatives. Over 128 articles were collected from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and the ProQuest database to locate additional approaches to reduce student textbook costs. Reviewing these documents provides an overview of what is occurring around the United States to alleviate high textbook costs for students. Also, unstructured informational interviews were conducted with Syracuse University instructors for anecdotal evidence; there was no systematic method for conducting the interviews.

From the research, approaches were categorized based on the implementing player: student, instructor, institutions of higher education, or the federal/state government (see Figure 1 at the end of this section). Publishers, wholesalers, and retailers were not considered viable sources of cost savings for students because these companies follow a business model that seeks to maximize

shareholder profit. Any action leading to a reduction of student cost at the expense of profits would face changes in business practices (GAO, 2005).

A review of the remaining textbook alternatives narrowed the focus of this study to approaches employed by faculty members. Studies consistently identify faculty members as the key players in reducing student cost of required course material. Faculty members have a direct influence over which materials are assigned, determining market demand. Faculty decisions can reduce student cost on a large and sustainable scale. Instructors' expertise in their respective fields allows them to make the best choices for their students.

Faculty approaches were identified in terms of either print-based or electronic-based materials. *Print materials* refers to works purchased as a physically-printed paper resource, while *electronic materials* refers to resources originally accessed digitally. Four elements were used to analyze each instructor approach: student costs, the quality of the material, the long-term sustainability of the resource, and ease of instructor implementation. Any additional positive or negative aspects to each approach were considered.

- Student Costs: This study aims to reduce the overall cost to students of required course material; therefore it is important to identify the cost of each approach and note any potential savings.
- Quality: Faculty will not adopt course material unless it is perceived to be of high quality and meets their academic standards (Movack, 2012). Often, this includes a rigorous and structured editorial review process,

additional features, graphic elements, and peer review. The perceived quality of the material will factor into the likelihood of faculty adoption.

- Long-term sustainability: It is important to consider the sustainability of each approach as a cost-savings measure to students. While it is important to conserve money now, potential future savings to students must also be considered.
- Ease of instructor implementation: The amount of instructor effort in assigning or compiling each strategy is important, considering faculty voluntarily select required course materials. Textbook alternatives require a substantial time commitment from faculty, which may not be available.

This study is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of cost-saving textbook alternatives faculty can use. However, the research is limited to documented approaches used by faculty in the United States to reduce textbook costs. Existing studies tended to be large in scope but focused on one particular approach. There may be small-scale approaches used by faculty in the United States to reduce student costs that are not represented within this study.

Online courses, including Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), were considered as an alternative approach at the beginning of this study. However, they represent a change in pedagogical practices, taking the student out of the physical classroom. This reaches beyond the scope of this study. It is important to note that MOOCs appear to be a growing trend in higher education with the potential for further research.

Figure 1:

Approaches to Reduce Textbook Costs

Students	Choosing a different format of textbook	Used Textbook Market: Previously owned textbooks sold by retailers or individuals.
		Rental Programs: A traditional textbook purchased for student use lasting a specified duration (typically 180 days).
		E-Textbook: A digital version of a printed textbook, which often include additional features to enhance user experience.
		Older Edition: Use of previous textbook edition of a particular text.
	E-Commerce	Purchasing a textbook online.
	Sharing	Borrowing or sharing a textbook with another student(s).
Borrowing a course reserve from a university library.		
Faculty	Customized Textbook	Faculty work with the publisher to create a customized version of a textbook that is designed for a particular course
	Course Reader	Collection of course materials compiled by the instructor and are bound and sold to students.
	Use of an Open Textbook	Open Textbooks are textbooks created under a creative commons copyright license. Individuals can reuse, remix, redistribute, and reproduce text.
	All course material available online	Faculty posts all related course material online through websites, course management systems, and OpenCourse Ware initiatives. Students access materials via the internet at no cost.
	Use of older textbook editions	Faculty retention of textbooks for longer durations and use of older textbook editions in place of the newest available edition.

Colleges/Universities	Include textbooks in tuition cost	Students are charged a course materials fee for courses. Using University-wide buying power, the institution is able to negotiate lower prices per book on behalf of students.
	Educate faculty on approaches to reduce cost	Initiative to increase faculty awareness on alternative approaches to course materials that reduce student spending on textbooks. Develop tools and programs to better educate and assist faculty with finding alternative formats.
	Educate students on ways to reduce textbook cost	Initiative to provide students with information on formatting and purchasing alternatives to decrease their individual cost of textbooks.
	Create open textbooks for faculty use	Development and use of an open textbook (textbook with a creative commons license) for use in highest enrolled courses.
	Increase financial aid to students	Increase the amount of financial aid available to students to cover course materials.
Federal/State Government	Regulate publishers' content changes in new editions	Restrict publishers' ability to produce new editions to textbook without enough content revision from the previous edition.
	Facilitate open textbook development nation wide	Develop and oversee a network of open textbooks that ensure a high quality textbook is produced.
	Require all federally funded research to be published with an open license	Mandate any research conducted using federal funds be published under an open license, reducing universities needs for purchasing costly academic journal subscriptions.

Chapter 2:

Literature Review

A variety of studies have been conducted on textbook costs, the sources of rising costs, and alternatives to traditional textbook use. To study the available textbook alternative options, over 128 articles and studies were reviewed. The following 16 studies from various organizations provide background context for this report. The remaining sources were cited as needed for further evidence of textbook alternatives.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is the most respectable main source in this report. The GAO has the most resources to conduct a non-biased analysis of college textbooks, and often the reports have been used as the foundation of similar studies discussed in this section.

Government Accountability Office. College textbooks: Enhanced offerings appear to drive recent price increases.

The GAO conducted a study in 2005 to identify the price change in textbooks, the factors contributing to the changes, and the reasons why U.S. textbook prices are higher than prices in other countries. The GAO reviewed data

from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index. They choose a sample of textbooks using a probability-based selection process and collected pricing information from a variety of bookstores and online sources. Additional information and technical commentary were provided through interviews with representatives of publishers, wholesalers, bookstores, the National Association of College Stores and the Association of American Publishers. The GAO found:

- the price of college textbooks increases on average 6% per year,
- the practice of bundling additional materials with textbooks best explains price increases,
- the increase in textbook prices can also be attributed to the frequency of textbook revisions, and
- publishers try to limit the re-importation of lower-cost international editions.

Government Accountability Office. College Textbooks: Students have greater access to textbook information.

In 2013, the GAO conducted a study to evaluate the extent to which the provisions of the 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) have been met by publishers and institutions of higher education. The HEOA requires publishers to disclose textbook prices during the marketing process and make bundled material available individually, and requires institutions of higher education to provide students and bookstores with textbook information prior to course registration. For this study, the GAO reviewed marketing documentation from

publishers and the websites of 150 randomly selected schools. The GAO found that:

- for the most part, publishers have disclosed the required information to faculty members during the marketing process,
- publishers have made bundled materials available individually, giving students more options in selecting course materials; however, this has provided students with only limited savings, because some materials are sold at a higher price individually than in a bundle,
- faculty textbook decisions are based on identifying the most appropriate course materials over affordability issues, and
- 81% of schools provide textbook information to students online; students benefit by being able to research textbook prices and make better purchasing decisions.

The Student Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) conducted the following four studies as part of their Make Textbooks Affordable Campaign. The organization provides some insight into textbook costs and alternatives but displays a bias against textbook publishers. Additionally, their resources for conducting studies are limited.

Fairchild, Marriah. Ripoff 101: How the current practices of the textbook industry drive up the cost of college textbooks.

The California Student Public Interest Research Group (CALPRIG) addresses student complaints over rising textbook costs. Student volunteers surveyed 521 students from University of California campuses immediately after they purchased textbooks from the campus bookstore. A total of 156 faculty members who teach the largest classes at universities were interviewed. CALPRIG found:

- University of California students will spend an average \$898 per academic year on textbooks,
- 66% of math and science textbooks were bundled, compared to 25% of liberal arts textbooks,
- 65% of faculty say that they “rarely” or “never” use information from additional materials in bundles,
- 75% of the textbooks studied published a new edition within a three- to four-year range,
- 59% of students were unable to find one used textbook in the school bookstore at the time of purchase,
- 76% of faculty say new editions of textbooks are justified less than half of the time,
- 87% of faculty say it was a “good” or an “okay” idea to include new information in a supplement rather than a new edition, and
- online textbooks may provide students with cost savings.

Allen, Nicole. A cover to cover solution: How open textbooks are the path to textbook affordability.

Another study by Nicole Allen for the Student PIRGs evaluates the long-term potential for student cost savings in relation to various format options for traditional textbooks and alternative textbook models. The Student PIRGs conducted an in-person survey of 1,428 students from 10 universities and analyzed the price of textbooks of 10 college subjects with at least one open textbook available. Allen found that:

- 75% of students say they prefer textbooks in a print format,
- 47% of students say they would use at least one digital format textbook,
- rental programs save students 61% of the new retail price of a textbook,
- e-textbooks save students 52% of the new retail price of a textbook,
- format options represent limited savings because they do not appeal to all students,
- open textbooks can save students 80% off their total textbook expenditure per year, and
- open textbook success depends on the development of a sustainable model of publishing.

Rosenfeld, David & Hegadus, Ava. Textbooks for the 21st Century: A guide to free and low cost textbooks.

This report, compiled for the Make Textbooks Affordable Campaign, examines lower-cost options for textbooks by publishers. They surveyed the price

of the five most widely used textbooks at 59 universities in the United States. In addition, they looked at the 22 most popular introductory textbooks by Thomson Learning, Pearson Education, Houghton-Mifflin, and McGraw-Hill, reviewing companies' online catalogues to determine the availability of lower-cost textbooks. They also spoke with faculty throughout the U.S. who use alternative textbooks in the classroom.

This study found:

- major publishers either do not have or do not advertise lower-cost textbooks,
- the rising price of traditional textbooks drives a growing number of other publishers and faculty to create low-cost and free textbooks,
- all textbooks should have a lower-cost alternative,
- universities should provide incentives for the creation of open textbooks, and
- the used book market should be encouraged to thrive.

Harley, D., Lawrence, S., Acord, S., & Dixon, J. Affordable and open textbooks: An exploratory study of faculty attitudes.

This study was conducted by the University of California, Berkeley, Center for Studies in Higher Education; it analyzes the Student PIRG's Make Textbooks Affordable Campaign. Although this study was conducted in 2009, it was the only available comprehensive study regarding faculty perceptions on textbooks. Harley et al. report the results of a survey and focus group relating to

the perceptions of textbook affordability of 246 faculty members at California universities. The study found:

- faculty members desire options to choose what is best for their discipline and teaching style,
- faculty feel that current textbooks need to be lower-priced, and new editions need to be strategically issued by publishers,
- 95% of survey respondents said they would consider assigning an open textbook if the only change was the manner of student access, and
- faculty suggest that solely electronic solutions will not be embraced in the near future, due to the lack of open textbook availability and differences across fields of study.

The following three studies were presented to the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance for review of college textbook costs.

**Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance. Turn the page:
Making college textbooks more affordable.**

A Congressionally-chartered 2007 report, by the advisory committee, provides advice to the U.S. Department of Education on student financial aid policy. They have determined that textbook prices are too high for low- and moderate-income families, leading to inadequate textbook affordability. The committee cites the main cause of high textbook costs as price driven by supply

rather than demand. To resolve the affordability issue for students, both long- and short-term approaches must be taken. Short-term steps can be taken to temporarily increase the affordability for all students. However, these short-term approaches have many disadvantages, including not applying to all students. While in the long-term they found, the textbook market must change from a focus on supply and textbook producers towards a demand and student/institution driven market. The committee further found that a number of states and colleges are in the process of taking steps to increase college and textbook affordability for all students.

Koch, James V. An economic analysis of textbook pricing and textbook markets.

In a report presented to the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, Dr. James Koch investigates the economic reasons behind increases in textbook costs and alternatives to reduce cost increases. Koch claims the textbook market is different from normal markets because the instructors assign college textbooks, but the costs fall on students. Student purchases are less responsive to price increases because students do not control the demand. Additionally, geographic differences among students lead to lower-cost textbooks in other countries being available for purchase by U.S. students over the Internet. Five major publishers, controlling about 80% of the market, dominate the publishing industry. There are many policy options, Koch suggests, from which stakeholders in the textbook market can choose.

Schroder, Pat. Analysis of Dr. James V. Koch's college textbook cost study plan & economic analysis.

The Association of American Publishers (AAP), in a response to Dr. James V. Koch's study, provides a publisher's perspective on textbook costs. President and CEO of the Association of American Publishers, Pat Schroder, has compiled a report presenting an analysis of Koch's study to the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance. In the report, the AAP refutes 11 claims made in Koch's study and provides commentary on what they believe to be true. The AAP claims:

- the average student spends \$650 per academic year on textbooks when revenue from selling a used book is taken into account,
- student spending on textbooks is increasing at a rate less than the rate of inflation,
- information on textbook prices is available to faculty during the selection process,
- on average, textbooks are revised on a four-year cycle,
- items in textbook bundles are made available for sale individually,
- student success improves with supplemental material use,
- it is legal for publishers to sell textbooks overseas at lower rates; in turn, this lowers the cost for American students,
- more than 3,000 books are available in e-textbook format, and
- the textbook industry is competitive and is not oligopolistic, as Koch suggests.

The remaining reports are from individual organizations and university systems. While informative, these studies have a narrow focus. The scope of the university research is limited to the individual campuses.

Dahlstrom, E., Walker, J.D., Dziuban, C. & Morgan, G. ECAR study of undergraduate student and information technology.

Educause Center for Analysis and Research (ECAR) conducts a yearly survey of undergraduates to investigate the relationship between students and technology. In 2013, surveys were sent to 1.6 million students at 251 universities, with 113,035 responses. The ECAR found:

- students value technology to help them achieve academic success and seek guidance from instructors for technology use in the classroom,
- students taking MOOCs prefer a blended learning environment,
- students own two to three Internet-capable devices, of which laptops are the most important for academics, and students are beginning to use smartphones and tablets at college, and
- students value privacy in their use of technology.

Evans, B. J. & Willinsky, J. Setting aside the course reader: The legal, economic, and pedagogical reasons.

A Stanford University study examines the changes to course readers in higher education. For this study, Evans and Willinsky examined 110 course readers from a variety of disciplines at Stanford University and Queen's

University. Then they measured the amount of material within the course reader that was freely available online in university library systems and in open access sources. They found that:

- 45% of material in course readers is freely available to students online,
- the average price for a new course reader is \$60, with a low of \$11 and high of \$173, and
- instructors can remove disputes over intellectual property rights by providing students with bibliographic information for course readings.

Nicholls, Natsuko H. The investigation into the rising cost of textbooks.

Nicholls examines textbook affordability at the University of Michigan (UM) in a study conducted for the University of Michigan library. Previously, increased student concerns over textbook cost led to the development of UM's Textbook Task Force. Nicholls identifies today's textbook options and the possibility of open textbook use in the future. As a solution to textbook affordability, the University of Michigan looks into the creation of a library-based textbook publishing program. The program would offer low-cost print-on-demand options, offering a bound book for \$24.99 with a maximum of 832 pages. The study determines that more attention to textbook alternatives is necessary to increase student textbook affordability.

**Nicholls, Natuko H. Demographic data on textbooks and usage statistics:
Implications for textbook cost-saving analysis.**

Following the study mentioned above, the University of Michigan conducted a survey of student textbook use in highly enrolled courses. Of the 2,582 students in the six highest enrolled courses, the response rate was 30%. Students enrolled in more than one highly enrolled course could respond multiple times. The following findings are most applicable to this report:

- senior year students are less likely to purchase textbooks than underclassmen,
- students that are more cost-conscious are less likely to purchase textbooks,
- students are less likely to purchase more expensive textbooks,
- 53% of students said they experienced difficulty at least once when selling back their textbook, and
- for the highly enrolled course: 63% of students said they purchased a new or used print textbook, 16% of students said they rented a print textbook, 10% of students said they never obtained a copy of a textbook, and 2% of students said they use a library copy of the textbook.

University of Wisconsin System. Textbook costs in higher education.

This report by the Office of Operations Review and Audit of the University of Wisconsin System was conducted to assess rising textbook costs. The Office of Operations reviewed institutional and legislative efforts to control textbook costs and interviewed bookstore managers within the University of

Wisconsin System. This study found that the university system approach of developing a textbook-purchasing consortium may not be successful in achieving cost savings. However, individual institutions can meet their cost saving needs by consulting faculty, students, and bookstore representatives. Some approaches mentioned in this report include the following:

- for students to comparison-shop, buy used textbooks, and sell back textbooks when possible,
- for faculty to be aware of the student cost of required textbooks, use less expensive textbooks editions, commit to one textbook for multiple semesters, use alternative textbook options, and only require actively used textbooks, and
- for institutions to have a rental program, increase the supply of used textbooks, place textbooks on reserve at the library, and educate faculty and students on textbook costs.

Lewis, David. How to make good affordable textbooks.

David Lewis, the dean of the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis University Library, conducted a study determining that there is a simple solution to the problem of high textbook costs. Lewis proposes that universities contribute funding to a nonprofit organization that will produce open textbook content. Lewis claims that students want the flexibility of both print and digital content, a similar model that Flat World Knowledge and Rice University's Connexions follow. These programs offered free access to materials online with

the option of a bound print version for a small fee. Author compensation is a real motivator in textbook production, so this organization would provide the necessary funds for authors. The open content allows for instructor commentary on work and leads to a larger body of information for instructors to pull from and use to add value to education.

Chapter 3:

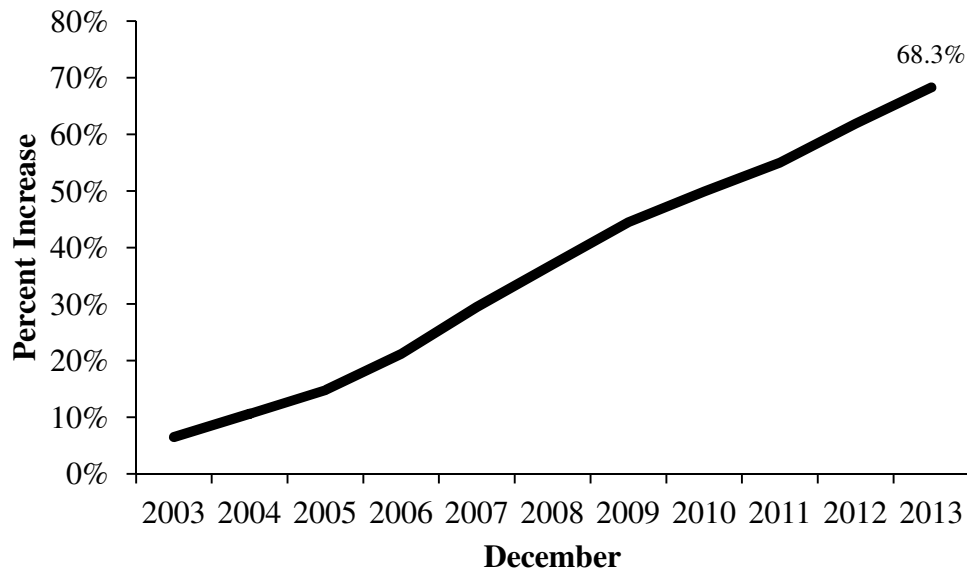
Causes of the Rising Textbook Costs

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that from 1986-2004, textbook prices increased nearly 6 percent per year (2005). During the same time, textbook prices increased a total of 186 percent, compared to the inflation rate of 72 percent. The College Board reports that the average student spent \$1,200 on textbooks during the 2012-13 academic year (2013). The most recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates college textbook prices increased 68.3% from December 2003 through December 2013 (see Figure 1).

The actual amount that a student spends on textbooks each semester is difficult to determine because several factors lead to wide variations in textbook pricing. Factors affecting individual textbook costs include: the individual's college or university, their year in school, the number of courses, discipline of study, and the availability of used textbooks ("Textbook Costs," 2007). The Pew Research Center estimates that the higher education textbook market is more than \$8 billion (Parker, Lenhart & Moore, 2011).

Figure 2:

**Annual Percentage Increase in Collge Textbooks,
December 2003-2013**



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Copyright Law

This section on Copyright Law is compiled from information within the *Using Copyrighted Works in Teaching* guide by Dr. K. Matthew Dames, the Director of the Copyright and Information Policy Office at Syracuse University. The researcher also sought additional clarification on copyright from Dr. Dames. Copyright laws exist to protect the intellectual property rights of the works owner. Often contractual agreements between publishers and authors transfer ownership rights from the author to the publisher. Nonetheless, every work is entitled to copyright protection within the United States. Faculty and students must be aware of copyright limitations to ensure they do not infringe upon the copyright protections of copyright owners. The following list contains key aspects of the United States Copyright Law discussed in this report:

- Copyright owners are entitled to the following rights for their protected work: the right to reproduce or copy their work, the right to create additional adaptations of their work, the right to distribute the work, and the right to publicly display and perform the work.
- Classroom teaching limits the above rights, provided the action takes place in a teaching space and the source material is legally obtained instructors can: display works in a classroom setting in face-to-face courses, play films, show photographs, read or project written passages, and play music.
- The doctrine of first sale states that once a copyright owner sells a particular copy of their copyrighted work, they forfeit the right to control the distribution of that copy of the work. This allows the used textbook market to exist as publishers do not have a claim to a particular copy after they have sold it once.
- Anyone may have unlimited use to a copyright work when they own the copyright for the work, the work is publically available, or the work does not have copyright qualifications.
- A copyright owner may license their work and place terms and conditions upon the license.
- See table below for a summary of uses for teaching copyrighted works compiled by Dr. Dames in *Using Copyrighted Works in Teaching*.

Figure 3:

Copy Right Basics

SUMMARY: Using copyrighted works in teaching for Syracuse University faculty

MATERIAL	RECOMMENDATIONS	WHAT YOU MAY DO	NOTES
Books and Monographs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Link to full-text, where available » Copy 10% or 1,000 words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provide multiple hard copies to students for classroom use » Place essential resources on Libraries course reserves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Avoid posting scanned copies, either on or outside Blackboard » Rotate & update assignment materials regularly » Alternatives include buying the book or licensing the e-book
Articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Link to full-text, where available » Copy 10% or 1,000 words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Link from Blackboard to full-text of Libraries-licensed e-resources » Place essential resources on Libraries course reserves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Libraries offer many academic resources in online and print versions » Avoid posting scanned copies, either on or outside Blackboard » Order coursepacks from SU Bookstore, if necessary
Audio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Link to or stream online audio, where available » Limit song lyrics, sheet music, and music video to 10% or 30-second maximum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Play audio in class » Play online audio segments » Place essential resources on Libraries course reserves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Coordinate audio segment creation with OLS or VPU » Use may also be covered by University performance rights licenses » Alternatives include buying the audio
Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Link to or stream online video where available » Use three minutes or 10% of the total work, whichever is less 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Show video in class where connected to curricular purpose » Show online video segments where connected to curricular purpose » Place essential resources on Libraries course reserves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Coordinate video segment creation with OLS or VPU » Non-curricular use (including student clubs) requires a performance license » DMCA exemptions may apply » Alternatives include renting or buying the video
Images	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Five copies of artistic or photographic images » 10% of the collection or 15 total images from a published image collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Show images in class where connected to curricular purpose » Place essential resources on Libraries course reserves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Images created from photography and scanning may qualify as fair use » Using images outside Blackboard or for publication may not be a curricular use
Using Blackboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Use links to online material instead of uploading copies » Make resources available only to enrolled students, for the semester » Don't remove or interfere with copy protections or copyright notices » Don't use the same work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Include links to online versions of curricular material » Post copies of copyrighted material only in limited portions, for limited duration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Images created from photography and scanning may qualify as fair use » Using images outside Blackboard or for publication may not be a curricular use

Source: Dames, Matthew K. (2013, December). Using copyrighted works in teaching. *Syracuse University Libraries*. Retrieved from <http://copyright.syr.edu/guide/>

Factors Influencing Textbook Costs

Nature of the Market

The textbook publishing industry is unlike the majority of economic markets today. The textbook market consists of five major publishers that control more than 80% of the college textbook market (GAO, 2005). James Koch, an economics professor at Old Dominion University, compares the textbook market to the pharmaceutical market. The markets are similar as, “the people who have the most influence over what is purchased (doctors and professors) don’t have to pay for their choices. Students do” (Koch, 2010, p. 1). This is a limited comparison, in the pharmaceutical market patients can request specific medication from doctors and purchase medication over the counter (Carol Dwyer, personal communication, March 28, 2014).

Studies of textbook costs show a concern that the imbalance of market demand power leads to the selection of more expensive products for students to purchase. Students cannot rebalance the market because they have no say in the demand of the product (GAO, 2005). A study of faculty perceptions on textbook affordability, conducted by the Center for Studies in Higher Education, reports that while instructors are sympathetic towards student textbook affordability, the perception of the quality of content will trump price during textbook selection (Harley, Lawrence, Acord & Dixon, 2009). There is a tendency among faculty members to associate cheaper textbooks with lower quality materials and an inferior education experience (Henry Jankiewicz, personal communication, March 22, 2014).

Production Costs

According to the Association of American Publishers, the cost to produce a single textbook is over \$1 million. This figure includes income payment to textbook development team, including: authors, experts, editors, researchers, reviewers, art director, sales staff, and designers (“Issues & FAQ,” 2011). Publisher-related expenses account for 78 percent of the total cost of a new textbook (see Figure 4). Part-time faculty and adjunct professors require more instructional support than experienced full-time faculty members (GAO, 2005). This leads publishers’ to invest in new technology, software, and tools to accommodate the different experience levels of instructors, further raising production costs (“Issues & FAQ,” 2011). Not all faculty require this additional support from the publishing industry.

In the second sales year of a particular edition, the used book market limits publishers’ profits, causing sales to drop by 30 to 75 percent of the textbooks sold in the first year (GAO, 2005). Publishers only receive sales dollars from the first purchase of a particular copy of a textbook. The doctrine of first sale in U.S. copyright law states that publishers can only recoup funds from the first sale of a particular copy. Publishers’ cannot profit from sales of their products in the used textbook market. Often publishers will not recoup the initial production cost of a single textbook in the first edition sales, leading to revised editions of successful textbooks.

Figure 4:

Distribution of New Textbook Costs

Publisher's Paper, Printing, Editorial Costs	32%
Publisher's Marketing Costs	15%
Author Income	12%
College Store Personnel	11%
Publisher's General and Administrative	10%
Publisher's Income	7%
College Store Operations	7%
College Store Income	5%
Freight Expense	1%
Total	100%

Source: National Association of College Stores, 2005. Available at <https://www.uvawise.edu/bookstore/files/bookstore/docs/pdf/textbook.pdf>

Publishers' Practices

Textbook publishers have a responsibility to their shareholders to maximize profit (Lewis, 2009). Often, this leads publishers to partake in practices that increase the cost of textbooks, such as new editions, bundling materials, and publishing international editions. The following are examples of practices of publishers that contribute to rising textbook costs.

- Textbooks require a sustained effort to maintain quality and relevance. The textbook revision cycle renders older textbook editions virtually obsolete. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), publishers revise textbooks after three to four years in circulation (2005). The revision cycle varies across disciplines, as some require the material to be as current as possible, and others have unchanging fundamental principles, such as mathematics and some sciences. Publishers continue to

revise textbooks to recoup the cost from the initial investment of textbook development (GAO, 2005). New textbook sales are highest in the first year an edition is available, and they begin to decline as the supply of used textbooks grows (GAO, 2005). Professors perceive the frequent revision of textbooks as the unnecessary publication of new editions (Harley et al., 2009). A CALPIRG survey conducted of faculty members at public universities reports that 76 percent of faculty say new textbook editions are justified half of the time or less (Fairchild, 2004). However, publishers counter this claim by explaining that revisions are driven by the instructional needs of faculty members, not by profit (“Textbook Costs,” 2007).

- The GAO reports that the practice of bundling explains recent price increases (2005). Bundling refers to publishers’ combining textbooks with supplemental material such as workbooks, CD-ROM’s, and online access codes. Forcing the sale of these combined materials makes it difficult for students to search for cheaper options. In 2008, Congress enacted the Higher Education Opportunity Act, forcing publishers to sell items in bundled packages individually to allow students the option to seek the lowest price for themselves. A GAO report (2013), following up on the success of the legislation, reports that while publishers have unbundled textbooks, this may have limited students cost-savings because some supplemental material is sold individually at a higher price than when it is

bundled. A 2012 survey found that students expressed concerns that the unbundled price of access codes to homework sites made it difficult for them to find used textbooks and reduce their costs (“Textbook Survey Report”).

- Publishers use differential pricing to produce cheaper editions of textbooks sold outside the United States that are virtually identical to their U.S. counterpart, known as international editions. The existence of international editions selling for cheaper rates highlights the high cost of textbooks within the United States. An increasing number of international editions are making their way into the United States because of the prevalence of e-commerce. Previously, publishers used copyright laws to prohibit any unauthorized importation into the United States (Gerber, Muraff & Cuklerski, 2013). Despite publishers’ efforts to restrict the importation of international editions, the Supreme Court in *Kirtsaeng v. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.*, has decided that a copyright owner cannot restrict the importation and resale of legally produced foreign copies, further limiting publishers efforts. The Association of American Publishers says “any incremental overseas sales help defray publishers substantial fixed costs – costs that would otherwise be borne entirely by U.S. students” (Schroeder, 2006, pp. 8-9).

Textbook Piracy

Online piracy of textbooks is a growing problem for publishers in the textbook industry and is a violation of copyright law. Students or individuals scan their books and upload them to websites such as Textbook Torrents and Scribd, which allow users to share PDF copies of textbooks online. Any reproduction or copy of a copyrighted work without the consent of the copyright owner is illegal. This is similar to piracy in the entertainment industry, with pirated copies of music and movies floating around on various websites. The Online Piracy Working Group for the Association of American Publishers (AAP) finds an increasing number of textbook titles digitized and available online without the copyright owners permission. Edward McLoyd, the Director of Digital Policy for the AAP believes that more people will illegally download digital texts as the popularity of digital formats increases (Young, 2008).

Chapter 4:

Student Response to Textbook Costs

Incoming college freshman may receive a sticker shock when heading to the bookstore to purchase their required course materials for the first time. During high school, students become accustomed to receiving course materials, mainly textbooks, at no cost to them personally. In K-12 education, taxpayer dollars fund student textbooks. Students respond to the high cost of their required course materials in a variety of ways. 94% of students say the cost of textbooks and course material impacts their ability to afford college (“Textbook Survey Report,” 2012).

It is difficult to determine the exact dollar amount that students spend per year on required course materials. Reports from various organizations suggest that students may be spending between \$740 and \$1,200 per academic year on required course materials. The highest estimate, from the College Board indicates that students will spend \$1,200 on books and supplies in the 2013-14 academic year (2013). They calculate this estimate by collecting tuition and fee data from colleges and universities across the country. On the lower end, the National Association of College Stores (NACS) reports that students spent an estimated \$740 on required course materials (NACS, 2014a). The NACS report students

spent an average \$370 in the fall 2013 semester at college stores. However, neither estimate considers any savings a student may receive by selling their book at the conclusion of the semester.

According to the Association of American Publishers, the estimated figures of student textbook spending are inaccurate because they do not take into consideration the money students receive by selling back their books. Publishers' and government agencies claim that selling a textbook to a bookstore or other retailer may recoup students as much as 50% of a book's retail value (Schroeder, 2006; GAO, 2005). In the author's experience, it is unlikely to receive the 50% buyback rate acknowledged by these organizations. A class of 28 upper division social science students expressed similar concerns, in their collective experience they have not received more than 30% of the new retail price at buyback. There was an exception for books sold with a guaranteed 50% buyback at a bookstore. No student could recall ever receiving more than \$60 back for any textbook.

Students may also sell textbooks to online retailers. Amazon.com offers to buyback textbooks in exchange for an amazon.com gift card that can in turn be used to purchase future textbooks. This rate varies based on the supply of used books, up to 80% of the retail value according to their website. Based on the author's experience, selling books to amazon recoups the most revenue for students. Students are likely to receive the most money back at amazon by selling a textbook after the start of the next semester, when amazon's supply is low. However, unlike bookstores, compensation is in the form of an amazon gift card, which can be debilitating for some students.

In general, students are unhappy with the amount they are required to pay for textbooks. Students say paying tuition implies being taught the material by a professor and a textbook should not be required. Many fields of study have not had fundamental content changes in several decades. Students question the need to purchase brand-new textbooks when the basic principles can be found elsewhere (Kingsbury & Galloway, 2006). Students complain if they purchase high-cost textbooks, but the course covers only a portion of the material (Hechinger, 2008). Students also express concern over textbooks assigned and authored by their professor, who receives royalty payments off of their purchases. Students wishing to reduce their costs can act as a catalyst for change by starting a discussion at their university. Student groups can help foster communication with faculty and administration. Expressing concerns has led some universities to change policies, which will be discussed in further detail later.

Students cover the cost of textbooks either out-of-pocket, on credit cards, or by using excess financial aid or grant, and other loan funds. The National Association of College Stores reports that 41% of students use grants, scholarships, and student loans to pay for course materials (NACS, 2014a). Of those students, an average of 57% of their course materials were covered by these funds (NACS, 2014a). While material maybe covered by scholarships, grants, or loans, students may be required to pay up front and out-of-pocket, to be reimbursed later. In most cases, students with financial aid covering the cost of textbooks have no choice but to purchase materials from the school bookstore.

Faculty members have full control over the assignment of required course materials. By definition, students have to obtain the required course material to succeed in a course. Students can control costs through individual choices. They can choose where they get the material, the format of the material, and when they obtain the material. Making educated decisions can help students save money on their total textbook purchases.

Venues for Textbook Purchase

An important factor for students to consider is where they will get their course materials. Textbooks can be found at a variety of locations. According to the National Association of College Stores, 87% of students consider price an important factor in deciding where to purchase textbooks (NACS, 2013a).

Publishers will directly sell textbooks and e-books, and may even rent their popular titles. Bookstores are the main venues for purchasing new textbooks. They stock new textbook copies, often have a limited supply of used textbooks, and an increasing number of stores are adding rental programs. Textbook information is given by instructors to bookstores directly to ensure the correct textbook is ordered. Bookstores provide the convenience of immediate one-stop shopping for all of their course material needs.

Students' familiarity with the Internet allows them to use e-commerce to quickly search for cost-saving alternatives. E-commerce is a growing method of textbook purchase for students. Searching online, students can compare a variety of websites for different formatting options, including new and used textbooks,

rental programs, and e-books. A study conducted by Synovate found that “28% of four-year students bought some of their textbooks online in Spring 2006”

(Schroeder, 2006, p. 4). Peer-to-peer web forums allow students to directly buy and sell textbooks. Popular websites include amazon.com and half.com, which offer used textbooks and previous editions for low prices. See Figure 5 below for a list of popular textbook websites and formats they offer. Cheaper international editions can be purchased and shipped to the U.S. through online transactions.

Students can purchase an international edition from websites such as amazon.co.uk.

Figure 5:

Available Format Options for Major Online Textbook Companies

Company	New	Used	Rental	EBook	Sell
amazon.com	X	X	X	X	X
abebooks.com	X	X			
alibris.com	X*	X*	X*		
allbookstores.com	X*	X*	X*	X*	
barnesandnoble.com	X	X	X	X	
bigwords.com	X	X	X	X	X
bookbyte.com	X	X	X		X
booksprice.com	X*	X*	X*	X*	
boundless.com	X**				
campusbookrentals.com			X		X
chegg.com	X	X	X	X	X
coursesmart.com			X	X	
directtextbook.com	X*	X*	X*	X*	
ecampus.com	X	X	X	X	X
half.com	X	X	X		X
kno.com				X	
textbooks.com	X*	X*	X*	X*	
textbookwise.com	X*	X*	X*	X*	
valorebooks.com	X	X	X	X	X

*compares prices across multiple sites

**Sells a textbook alternative, not exact textbook

Most libraries keep copies of the most popular textbooks in stock in the library. Due to the high demand for free access to require texts, most place time limitations on the loan (Clark, 2009). Students wishing to avoid purchasing a textbook may be able to check out the library reserve to supplement textbook ownership. Students may inadvertently break the copyright law by scanning or copying a textbook in an attempt to gain quick access to the material while avoiding cost.

Other students are also a source of textbooks. Social media sites, such as facebook.com, allow students to set up groups searching for both textbook buyers and sellers. Students can negotiate prices when selling directly to each other, eliminating the need of a middleman. Students can also save by sharing a textbook with fellow classmates; however, although sharing reduces the total cost by splitting the purchase price, the access time students have to a text is diminished.

Available Textbook Format Choices for Students

Figure 6:

**Average Cost Savings of New Retail Value
Textbook Formats**

Textbook Format	Average Savings
New Textbook	0%
Used Textbook	25-50%
Rental Program	50-60%
E-Textbook	52%
Previous Edition	~90%

New Textbooks

Students always have the option of purchasing a new textbook at full retail value. They can purchase new textbooks at a bookstore, directly from the publisher, or through online retailers. Generally, a student will pay the same price, no matter the venue. The first sale of a textbook ensures the copy is clean, unmarked, and in perfect condition. New textbooks have a higher retail price than all other format options. Despite the fact that they are more expensive than alternative format options, they are purchased more frequently. Data from full-time college student spending on course materials indicates that 70% of the course materials purchased at college stores were new (NACS, 2013b).

The NACS reports that 9.5 million new textbooks were purchased from 194 U.S. college stores in 2011-12. Data from the same report indicate the average price paid for a new textbook was \$68 (NACS, 2013b). The 2013 College Store Industry Financial Report calculates that new book sales dollars exceed used book sales dollars by more than 2.5 times (NACS, 2013b).

Used Textbooks

Many bookstores and online retailers sell previously owned copies of textbooks, in varying conditions, for a reduced price. At bookstores, used textbooks sell at around 75 percent of the new retail price (GAO, 2005). In 2011-12, 5.5 million used textbooks were sold at 194 college stores across the United States. The average cost of a used textbook is \$53 (NACS, 2013b). The supply of used textbooks is limited to a bookstore's ability to repurchase and store the used

books. Used textbooks are not a sustainable source of lower prices because of the limited supply (GAO 2005).

Of the course materials purchased at college stores by full-time students during the 2011-12 academic year, 30% were used (NACS, 2013b). According to the NACS' 2013 Industry Financial Report, college stores saw \$1.51 billion in used textbook sales in the 2011-12 academic year (NACS, 2014b). Many stores believe their sales of used textbooks would be higher if the supply were larger.

Students can find significant savings by shopping online. Both Chegg.com and amazon.com claim to save students up to 90% off the retail price of a physical textbook. Individual sellers will try to offer the lowest price at that time to ensure their copy is purchased, this further lowers used textbook costs. It is possible to find some editions for as low as one cent plus shipping.

Rental Programs

Colleges and Universities are increasingly adopting textbook rental programs. The NACS reports more than 3,000 universities offer a textbook rental program (NACS, 2013b). Renting a textbook allows the student to know upfront exactly how much they will be paying for the textbook over a span of time. Compared with purchasing a new textbook at retail value, rental systems cut student cost by 50% or more (Koch, 2006). Not all textbooks are available for rent; retailers tend to offer rentals of highly enrolled courses and consistently used textbooks. Rental programs are costly to implement and typically will not recoup

costs until the second year of textbook use (Koch, 2006). Online retailers also allow students to rent physical textbooks on a per semester basis.

E-Textbooks

Advances in technology provide students with a new way to access and read textbooks. Many publishers offer electronic versions of most of their textbooks for purchase. Digital textbooks are similar to .pdf documents, users can annotate, search and highlight on the document. Some versions are compatible with e-readers, such as Apple's iPad and Amazon's Kindle. On average, e-textbooks are available for 48% of the retail price of a new textbook (Allen, 2010). The current e-textbook model provides each student with login access to the content for approximately 180 days, the length of a semester. Unlike physical copies, a student loses all access to the material after the access period. Since electronic textbooks are licensed from a publisher to an individual, there is no expectation of ownership of the licensed material. E-textbooks do not limit a student's ability to read the work in print. A student may print out chapters of an e-textbook at their discretion. The cost of this depends on the printing situation. Printing physical copies of an e-textbook can become costly, considering ink and paper costs. Depending on the amount of printing, e-textbooks may actually cost the student more than a physical textbook (Koch, 2006).

E-textbooks allow students immediate access to the material. Portability is a key benefit, allowing students greater mobility and convenience in reading and storing their books. A study by the Student PIRGs finds that the main reason

students prefer e-textbooks is the convenience of access to the material (Allen, 2010). Students may also have the option of purchasing text on a chapter-by-chapter basis. Purchasing by chapter may be a more affordable option when instructors do not assign the entirety of a textbook.

Previous Editions

After a new textbook edition is announced, publishers no longer produce old editions. Instructors will usually assign the newest edition, because they are easily available for bookstores to order from the publisher. Previous editions can be purchased in online marketplaces, such as half.com, but both the supply and demand for older editions of textbooks are limited. It is possible to find a copy of an older edition for as little as one cent, plus shipping.

Students with concerns about the cost of a particular textbook edition can discuss the possibility of using an older edition instead of the newest version with the faculty member assigning the text (“The High Cost,” 2008). Multiple studies show that faculty members feel that new textbooks are not always justified and may allow students to use older editions. By discussing this option with their instructor, a student can ensure that they are not missing out on any essential course material. At Minnesota State University, 70% of students surveyed said they had purchased an older textbook edition to save money. Of those students, 20% said the older edition made the course more difficult than if they had the current edition (“Textbook Survey Report,” 2012). Students who do use older editions will need to ensure the reading assignments in the syllabus align with the

older edition. This may require collaboration with fellow classmates in order to compare the editions. Faculty should be consulted because most new editions have significant changes to the problem sets, which may present problems for students to complete class assignments.

When Students Purchase Textbooks

Before the Semester Begins

The 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) requires colleges and universities to place the international standard book number (ISBN) for required textbooks online prior to course registration (GAO, 2013). This ensures that students are aware how much their course materials may cost them in an individual course and allows time to comparison-shop. Students seeking to reduce their cost should start early and compare prices to find the best price and format option for their needs. Searching multiple formats and purchasing locations will present multiple price options for students. Prior to the start of the semester, there is a high supply of used textbooks and availability of textbook rentals. This is the ideal time to comparison-shop because students looking to sell their textbooks will compete to offer the lowest prices in online marketplaces. When shopping online, it may take one or two weeks to process and ship the order. It is important to consider shipping time when shopping online if a student needs to have the book by the first class.

After the First Class

Even with textbook information posted prior to the beginning of the semester, some students have a tendency to wait until after the first class to decide which textbooks to purchase. Students gauge how much the textbook will influence their success in the course and make a decision on whether or not to buy it. However, students waiting to purchase a book prior to the first class may find themselves falling behind on course readings. Used textbooks at school bookstores are limited and may run out if a student waits too long. Students wishing to find the cheapest used textbook online may have to wait one or two weeks before a purchase arrives. Any delay in textbook purchases may result in a students falling behind, and once they are behind, it can be difficult to catch up.

Never Purchasing a Textbook

Students may refuse to purchase a textbook. Recent studies show that as many as seven out of ten students have not purchased the required textbook for a course at least one time (Kinzie, 2006). The U.S. PIRG reports that 70% of college students say they had not purchased a textbook at least once because the cost was too high (“High Prices,” 2011). Websites, such as ratemyprofessor.com, allow students to voice their opinion on courses and instructors. Students will often complain on these websites when an instructor does not use the required textbook enough to justify the purchase, which leads future students to refrain from purchasing the textbook. Some students do not have the financial means to purchase all of their required course materials and gamble by not buying a copy

for themselves. Students who choose not to purchase a textbook may opt to use the library reserve copy or share with another student.

The actual amount that a student spends each semester depends on many individual factors: a student's year in school, the number of enrolled courses, the discipline of study, and the format of the textbook purchased. The individual purchasing decisions that students make can lead to cost savings on textbooks. The potential cost savings provided by student choices are limited to student format preference. Less expensive format alternatives that bookstores and other retailers provide only save students the upfront costs of textbooks. Price reductions are short-term savings that are dependent on the publisher set retail price of the textbook. Individual course instructors remain in control of which specific materials students purchase.

Chapter 5:

Print Course Material Options for Instructors

Historical records show that as long as writing has existed, societies have used written word to teach other. Evidence suggests that textbooks existed in the ancient societies such as, Rome, China, and Egypt (Guthrie, 2003). Aristotle used books to teach others his philosophical work. The invention of the Gutenberg press and mobile type in the 15th century enabled the mass production of books, and textbooks became the universal teaching tool in education. This historic tradition continues into modern times, even in a technically advanced world. Now, within the United States, large multi-firm corporations dominate the publishing industry (Guthrie, 2003).

Early on in education, students are exposed to print text and become accustomed to the resource. Multiple surveys have found that students prefer using physical print materials to electronic materials. A white page report by the National Association of College Stores lists the following benefits of print work and traditional textbook use: they are not dependent on power and will not crash, they do not require compatibility upgrades in order to function, they remain a permanent reference, and they produce lower levels of pollution in the

environment, compared with the hardware required to retrieve electronic content (“The Great Textbook,” 2006).

A significant portion of publishers’ expenses can be attributed to the cost of paper and printing. Reports indicate that physical printing costs are 32.5% of the retail cost of a new textbook (“Textbook costs,” 2007). In the case of any print resource, the cost of paper and printing will be reflected in the consumer cost.

Although a traditional textbook is the leading choice among faculty instructors, some also assign books instead of a textbook. Different disciplines rely on book chapters more than others, for example, English and philosophy. Depending on the number of assigned books, student cost is typically lower than the cost of one textbook. Assigning books allows the course to focus on specific topics. Outside of published books, there are four print alternative approaches to traditional textbook faculty can consider.

- Faculty can create customized versions of traditional textbooks that allow them to adapt a publisher’s textbook to their specific course and method of teaching.
- Instructor-produced course readers, also know as “course packs,” aggregate multiple readings and materials into one bound “reader” that students use for the duration of a course.
- In some disciplines, the fundamental content has not had significant changes in many decades. Instructors can commit to using one edition of a textbook for multiple semesters, regardless of new editions. Instructors

can also collaborate within their discipline to assign one textbook for multiple courses, maximizing student use.

- Instructors can seek “no-frills” editions of traditional textbooks offered by publishers and work with bookstores supply this option for students.

Customized Versions of Traditional Textbooks

For years, publishers have offered faculty members the option of customizing a textbook to fit their syllabus (Young, 2010). To maximize profit on a traditional textbook, publishers aim to create broad textbooks that appeal to as many instructors as possible. Publishers recognize that each nationally marketed textbook will not entirely match every instructor’s teaching style. Offering to create customized versions of textbooks at the instructor’s discretion allows the publisher to increase their profits. Instructors work with the publishing company, choosing which chapters to include in a customized textbook. They may even choose to include chapters from other textbooks from the same publisher. Depending on the publishing firm, faculty can also include their own material in the printing process. Publishers offer this approach as a way to combat the used textbook market that undercuts their new textbook sales (Young, 2010).

Instructors determine the amount of material to include in each custom textbook. Deriving content directly from the publisher ensures a high quality product. The cost of a custom edition varies, depending on the amount of written material and graphics selected for inclusion. For example, McGraw-Hill offers textbook customization in black and white for \$0.13 per page plus a \$2.25 fee for

cover and front matter, there is a \$9.50 minimum. Color copies are available for \$0.14 per page plus an \$8 fee for cover and front matter, there is a \$15 minimum (The McGraw-Hill Companies, 2010). Works with higher material content have low student savings, while works with significantly less material have the potential for higher savings. In less than three percent of cases, universities can recoup royalties depending on how much additional information a faculty member adds to the custom text (“Pearson Perspectives,” 2008).

Creating a customized textbook ensures that the material is relevant and assigned during the course. However, custom textbooks have the potential to be too specialized, so that another faculty member who teaches the same course may not be able to use the same book, further limiting resale value (Rosenfield & Hegadus, 2006). The limited content and course-specific material limits the buyback value of the textbook and inhibits the used textbook market. Compared with a full version of the textbook, a customized edition may end up costing students more after buyback is considered.

Some publishers have “revamped” the technology associated with custom publishing. Online custom-publishing systems change the way instructors can create and develop custom textbooks. They can easily browse through collections, and mix-and-match content from multiple textbooks (Young, 2010). As instructors create the textbook, they can see in real time how much the publisher will charge students for their customized version.

Although the benefits to this method can reduce student cost and offer a textbook specifically designed for a course, instructors typically choose a

traditional textbook over a customized version, according to Ed Standford, the president of McGraw-Hill (Young, 2010). This approach depends on the course instructor working with the publishing company to create a customized textbook. Courses with multiple sections and instructors can achieve consistency with customized readings. The additional time required to tailor a custom textbook deters many instructors from looking for a lower-cost textbook (Rosenfield, 2006). Pearson, one of the five major publishers, encourages faculty to adopt custom textbooks because of the offered benefits to faculty: “exactly what and how you want to teach, how much it will cost, and whether you want to supplement your teaching with online or media solutions” (“Pearson Perspectives,” 2008, p. 2).

Course Readers

Course readers are another approach faculty can use to tailor course materials for to the needs of the course. Instructor’s can compile course readers with articles, journal entries, lecture slides, and visual aids to give students a resource that contains information pertinent to the course in a bound form. Unlike traditional textbooks, content within a course reader may be updated each semester. A course reader ensures that all the course material students need for a particular course resides in one place. Many instructors assign course readers for their courses. This method requires an instructor to take the time to actually design and gather material for the course reader.

The average price for a course reader is \$60; depending on the discipline and the amount of material, they vary from \$11 to \$173 (Evans & Ellinsky, 2012). The main factor in course reader cost is obtaining copyright permission for the material, the cost of which falls on students. Instructors must ensure they receive copyright permission for each material used prior to the production of the course reader. Material included in course readers are often freely available to students via the school library or online, meaning in some cases students pay to receive information they can obtain freely.

Instructors can work with bookstores or copy centers to create course readers right on campus or go through a third party. Companies specializing in course reader development give instructors the ability to consolidate different sources of materials in one convenient place and at a low cost to students. Of companies established to provide assistance in course reader development, more than 10,000 instructors worldwide use Study.net to assemble, manage, and produce readers for their courses. Third party companies ensure that copyright law is properly followed. See Appendix I for a list of private companies. Fair

Extend Use of Particular Textbook Editions

Instructors can extend the use of a particular textbook edition by continuing to use a textbook regardless of new editions by publishers. A study of faculty perceptions found that faculty view the publisher revision cycle as “unnecessary,” citing that many fields have not made fundamental content changes in decades (Harley et al., 2009). A faculty commitment to students that

they will use the same textbook as long as the content remains relevant to the course would combat frequent publisher revisions. Kennesaw State University instructor, Robert Chambers claims, “edition changes make professors’ lives miserable” (Chambers, 2013, p. 2). He encourages instructors to keep the edition that they have marked up and learned to teach from regardless of new editions.

The supply of used textbooks increases the longer the edition is on the market and students will be able to find cheap editions. Online marketplaces allow students to purchase previous editions for as little as one penny, plus the shipping cost. Publishers stop printing and selling previous textbook editions as a new edition is close to hitting the market. This practice typically encourages an instructor to assign the newest edition because it is the only option available at a retail price. However, maintaining a commitment to a particular edition allows a school bookstore to buy back those editions from students at the conclusion of a semester.

This approach cannot be guaranteed for long-term sustainability. It relies entirely on the used textbook market as publishers suspend the publication of the edition. The supply of used editions decreases dramatically once a new edition is scheduled for release. This method requires moderate involvement by the instructor. First, instructors need to communicate their desire to maintain use of the textbook edition with the local bookstore to ensure a used supply is accumulated. Second, they must monitor the content of both the older edition and the newer edition and supplement any major changes. Instructors can inform students of any significant content changes within the textbook during class time

or via email. Instructors may choose to create or modify the problem sets in previous editions.

Another way to extend the use of a textbook is using one textbook for multiple courses. Instructors can collaborate within their discipline to assign one textbook for multiple courses, maximizing student use of one particular textbook. This approach often applies to consecutive courses and prerequisite courses where students are learning continuous ideas. Disciplines where this method is commonly used are the natural sciences and mathematics, those with unchanging fundamental principles. Students in these majors will benefit the most because they are taking multiple courses on similar subjects. This approach increases a student's familiarity with one textbook, ensures students receive more "bang for their buck," and increases the likelihood of students retaining the textbook for a reference material after the course is over.

No-Frills/Value Editions

All major publishers offer "no frills" or "value editions" for some of their popular textbooks. These editions are lower-cost versions that have differences in formatting while maintaining the same educational value. Differences include black and white copies and loose-leaf versions. No-frills editions are cheaper by 25-50% of the full retail value of a textbook (Advisory Committee, 2007). Although these textbook formats are cheaper, some may not enter the used book market. For example, a loose-leaf textbook version will not be accepted for buyback because there is no guarantee that all the content is there. Private

companies develop value editions that present similar content to popular textbooks. The value editions claim to maintain the same material within the most popular textbooks. Boundless, claims to offer a high quality digital textbook that aligns chapter by chapter with popular textbooks for \$19.99 (Boundless, n.d.).

While many popular textbooks are available in alternate formats, publishers have not developed lower-cost versions for a majority of their textbooks. Publishers have a tendency to advertise these lower-cost options less than regular textbooks. A 2006 study found that although publishers offer no-frills textbooks, they are not advertised, and it is difficult for faculty to find information about them online (Rosenfield). An instructor must actively seek out and order a lower-cost version. In most cases, faculty selection of no-frills versions depends on the publishers' providing information on the options to faculty (Advisory Committee, 2007). The Book Industry Study Group found that only 30% of faculty surveyed said that they felt publishers provided them adequate pricing information and options for students (Shwartz, 2012).

Chapter 6:

Electronic Course Material Options for Instructors

The Internet provides the opportunity to create alternatives to traditional textbooks, and these are growing at a rapid pace. Technological advancements create new modes of information delivery for course materials from instructor to student. Electronic-based materials are a relatively new medium in education in comparison to print materials. They have grown in prevalence since the development of the World Wide Web in the early 1990s.

The Internet allows information to be shared and distributed faster and further than ever before. Today, instructors can be in constant communication with students via email, sending them course-related materials with the click of a button. The Internet also creates new ways for instructors to find and disseminate course materials. Scholarly information is shared and stored electronically in databases accessible via the Internet. Overtime more K-12 students use electronic resources in the classroom. Each year, more freshmen enter postsecondary education familiar with, or having been exposed to, digital learning experiences in their early education (Nelson, 2008). Marking a change in higher education, as early as 1995, instructors placed course materials online receiving mixed reactions from students (Young, 1995).

Several initiatives have begun creating digital book collections, beginning with the first producer of free electronic books, Project Gutenberg in 2002 (Nicolls, 2009). Project Gutenberg offers over 45,000 free high quality electronic versions of books that have expired copyright (Project Gutenberg, 2014). In the past few years, both the number of e-books available and the demand for e-books has increased (Nicolls, 2009).

The price of e-textbooks versions remains 48% of the new textbook cost. Even though the marginal cost to the retailer is eliminated and the marginal cost to the publisher reduced almost completely. Some argue that the cost of digital textbooks can be more expensive than some forms of print textbooks because of the costly infrastructure required to produce and distribute the content (Nicholls, 2011). Coursesmart, a company partnered with the major publishers, claims to offer 90% of currently used textbook titles (Coursesmart, 2014). The company is experimenting with a tool that allows instructors to view what pages students are viewing, for how long, and when. This allows instructors to track each student's progress within the digital textbook (Rosen, 2013).

Due to the ease of access to digital materials, electronic-based materials require careful review of copyright limitations. Instructors should be cautious to ensure they are not in violation of copyright law when using electronic resources. Students maintain the ability to print out a physical copy of any legally obtained electronic course material. This print-on-demand option allows students with varying preferences to receive their course materials in the manner they prefer.

Arguments in favor of electronic material are as follows: the reduced weight of multiple textbooks improves student health; increased mobility allows students to review course information from anywhere; content can be continually updated; long-term production costs are decreased; competition in the market for secure information might create more attractive prices (“The great textbook,” 2006). According to a study on faculty perceptions, a purely electronic solution will not be universally embraced in the near future (Harley et al., 2009). Print texts provide a safety net that is not dependent on Internet connections or a power supply, and they require no engagement with an e-reader (Harley et al., 2009). A move towards electronic materials exclusively may decrease the amount students read. According to Educause, students say that they read less with e-textbooks than with traditional textbooks (“ECAR Study,” 2013).

The following sections explore options for instructors to assign required course materials electronically.

Access All Materials Online

Students are accustomed to easy access to the digital world, both in their academic and private lives. A 2011 study by the Pew Research Centers reports that 98% of American undergraduates use the Internet, and 92% of American undergraduates wirelessly connect to the Internet via laptop or cell phone (Smith, Rainie, & Zickuhr, 2011). Instructors can provide students course readings online using library links through email, learning management systems, their own website, or Open CourseWare programs. Although less effective at saving student

costs, they can also ensure any assigned traditional textbooks or course readers are available in digital format.

University libraries compile databases with hundreds of thousands of resources available to students, and subscriptions to academic journals with costly fees. Data from the U.S. Department of Education (2012) shows that 51% of expenditures at U.S. academic libraries account for electronic serial subscriptions. Individual institutions may spend millions of dollars to provide students access to library journal subscriptions and databases funded by tuition costs. Professors have the ability to use these resources for academic purposes and do not need to obtain permission from the publisher for limited use. See 3 in Chapter 3 for guidelines of fair academic use. Using a university library system, professors can search the available resources and provide students with a link to the material using an online course management system, such as Blackboard. Linking the material removes any concern over copyright limitations because students are accessing the material and no copy is made.

Having access to library resources, a student can obtain an article with no out of pocket cost by viewing it electronically or printing out the material as desired. Easy access and mobility of learning management systems (LMS) allow students to conveniently view material in one location and on multiple electronic devices. This approach takes advantage of the numerous resources that a university library has accumulated and digitized. Instructors can replace or reduce the amount of material within a course reader by providing students reference information or hyperlink access to the article. Linking articles for student access

avoids unnecessary copying, printing, and resale of resources students can access via the school library or free online (Evans & Ellinsky, 2012). Course materials will stay current; as new materials become available, they can be added immediately with no waiting to be updated in a publication, as traditional textbooks do. Additionally, Evans and Ellinsky suggest that putting access to materials online further builds an individual's research skills by familiarizing them with library resources (2012).

Instructors must actively search for relevant content, which can be time-consuming. Should an instructor choose to upload a .pdf version of a document, they must remove it from the course management system at the conclusion of the semester to remain within copyright law (Dames, 2013). The cost to students wishing to print all of the course material can be expensive and tedious, depending on the amount of material. Additionally, course management systems can be difficult for some instructors to maneuver. Not all disciplines will benefit from this approach as an alternative, some disciplines rely heavily on book chapters rather than academic articles.

Colleges and universities use learning management systems for online collaboration between instructors and students. LMS provide tools that connect students and professors, can be used to create and post materials, provide for collaboration, and track students grades. Blackboard Inc. holds 51% of the \$1.9 billion LMS market as of 2011 (Riddell, 2013). Prominent publishing companies own three of the twelve notable LMS: Pearson LearningStudio, MindTap (Cengage Learning), and McGraw-Hill Connect (Riddle, 2013). A benefit of LMS

is that they are linked with services that provide faculty with support to learn how to use the system to meet their needs. However, faculty members have reported that the Blackboard system is difficult and time-consuming to learn and use, even with technical support (Bradford, Pociello, Balkon & Bakus, 2007). All LMS require some level of training and knowledge to use.

In addition, the OpenCourse Ware (OCW) movement is of note. OCW encourages institutions and faculty members to place all materials needed for a course online publically. This allows anyone to access the material at no cost. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the leader of OCW, places free lecture notes, exams, and reading lists on their online platform. MIT OpenCourseWare contains materials from 2,150 course and the website has received 125 million visitors. Their mission is to “publish all of our course material online and make them widely available to everyone” enriching education worldwide (MIT OpenCourseWare, 2014, para. 1). The OpenCourseWare consortium (available at <http://www.ocwconsortium.org>) aims to collect all open course materials in an online database. They are developing the largest body of open content, made possible through collaboration with higher education institutions worldwide. This allows the sharing and use of free, open, and high-quality educational materials (Open CourseWare Consortium, n.d.).

Open Textbooks

Open textbooks refer to textbooks created and distributed under an open copyright license, often freely available online. Open copyright allows the public

to reuse, remix, redistribute, and reproduce the work, so long as due credit is issued to the author. An instructor considering an open textbook has two options. First, they can create their own textbook specifically designed for their course. The development of any textbook requires a significant time investment by the instructor, but developing their own book ensures that all material students receive is relevant to the course. Designing the course materials ensures that the instructor maintains complete control over the course. They have the ability to change and add new material as they see fit.

Although students may pay little to no cost for this material, an instructor must devote a significant amount of time to the creation of an open textbook. Unlike traditional textbooks, which pay authors royalties, instructors creating an open textbook will not gain any revenue. There are instructors who create a textbook for their course through a publisher. The amount of time, in addition to the lack of financial compensation, is the main deterrent for most professors to begin developing their own open textbook. However, many see the benefits students gain as reason enough to undergo the project.

A number of academic institutions are pursuing the creation of open textbooks for use in their highest enrolled courses. Most notably, Rice University's OpenStax College develops high quality open textbooks for free adoption in higher education because of rising textbook costs. OpenStax currently offers 13 open textbooks that are customizable for individual instructor use. Available subjects include: physics, sociology, biology, anatomy, physiology, statistics, and economics. OpenStax textbooks maintain a high quality, a problem

for many open textbooks, by a peer review and rigorous editorial system (O'Neil, 2013). According to their website, 489 schools have already adopted OpenStax college textbooks. The OpenStax *College Physics* textbook claims it will save 1,000 students a total of \$300,000 after three years (OpenStax College, 2014). All books are held in Connexions, Rice University's open educational content repository and content management system. The repository holds collections of textbooks, courses, and journals broken down into 21,819 modules across all disciplines (OpenStax CNX, 2014).

Faculty without the time or means to devote to creating their own open textbooks can adopt an open textbook already created by a university program or private company. An increasing number of universities are establishing programs to encourage their faculty to develop open textbooks. See Appendix I for a list of open textbook collections. Donations from non-profit organizations foster the development and sustainability of these programs. Many available programs receive funding in part by grants from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Without significant structure in the development of open textbooks, concerns over quality arise. Richard Baraniuk, Director of the Rice University open textbook project, says that not enough programs are thinking about long-term financial stability and quality (Azevedo, 2013). There are no facilitation holding open textbook authors to any standards and indicating which textbooks are better than others. Studies on open textbook development suggest the establishment of a governing board to oversee the development of open textbooks.

Lewis advocates a nonprofit organization overseeing the development of open textbooks funded by participating universities (2012).

Congressional members see the value open textbooks play in higher education. Senators Dick Durban (D-ILL) and Al Franken (D-MN) introduced the Affordable College Textbook Act to Congress in November 2013. This Act creates a grant program for colleges and universities to create free and easily accessible open textbooks (Young, 2013). A corresponding bill exists in the House of Representatives co-sponsored by Congressmen Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX-15) and George Miller (D-CA). Senator Durban believes the legislation addressing textbook costs will reduce the “substantial barrier to attaining a college education” (as cited in U.S. PIRG, 2013). Federal oversight of open textbook creation would establish credibility standards that ensure open textbooks maintain high quality editorial criteria.

Developed under an open copyright license, open textbooks can be customized by instructors. The ability to adapt an open textbook to their course is a main motivator for faculty to adopt open textbooks (Novack, 2012). Additionally, content personalization enriches the learning experience and helps improve the retention and completion rates of students (Novack, 2012).

Although the collections are growing, not all professors in all disciplines will be satisfied with the available open textbooks. Currently, there are not enough open textbook materials available across the disciplines to suit the needs of all faculty members in every course of study (Harley et al., 2009). Another factor limiting the adoption of open textbooks is the lack of instructor knowledge

to locate a suitable textbook. It can be difficult for professors to locate an open textbook to suit their specific course needs and meet the quality standards of the professor. According to a study of faculty, 95% of the faculty members surveyed said they would consider the adoption of an open textbook if the only change from a traditional text were the manner of student access (Harley et al., 2009).

To combat the difficulty of locating an open textbook and increase faculty adoption, the University of Minnesota established a collection of open textbooks called the Open Textbook Library. The collection holds more than 140 titles of open textbooks and is available at open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/. The University of Minnesota recognizes the importance of peer review and commentary in establishing the credibility of open textbooks. They monetarily reward faculty for both adopting and reviewing open textbooks within their collection. The faculty reviews establish the credibility of the textbooks within the collection and allow for differentiation in the quality of the open textbooks (Smith, 2012).

Chapter 7:
Recommendations for Syracuse University

Currently at Syracuse University

The following charts show information on Syracuse University faculty, undergraduate students, tuition and fees, and library offerings.

Figure 6:

Syracuse University Faculty Type, Fall 2013

Faculty Type	Count	Percent
Full-time	1,043	65%
Part-time	94	6%
Adjunct	472	29%

Source: https://www.syr.edu/about/pdf/SU_FACTS_2014.pdf

Figure 7:

Undergraduate Enrollment at Syracuse University, Fall 2013

Student Type	Count	Percent
Full-Time Student	14,422	96%
Part-Time Student	675	4%

Source: https://www.syr.edu/about/pdf/SU_FACTS_2014.pdf

Figure 8:

Syracuse University Tuition and Fees

Academic Year	Tuition and Fees
2013-14	\$38,970
2014-15	\$40,380
Percent Change	+ 3.6%

Source: <http://news.syr.edu/university-sets-undergraduate-tuition-room-and-board-rates-for-2014-15-21422/>

Figure 9:

Syracuse University Library Holdings, 2013

Type of Material	Count
Printed Volumes	3.4 million
Microforms	150,291
Periodicals/Serials	33,187
Electronic Books	41 million

Source: https://www.syr.edu/about/pdf/SU_FACTS_2014.pdf

Students

Syracuse University students respond in a variety of ways when they receive their required course material information. Students receive textbook information off of the bookstore website, directly at the bookstore, or through the course instructor via email, syllabus, or Blackboard. In addition to shopping at the SU Bookstore for textbooks, SU students shop online to find the lowest priced textbooks. On the social media platform Facebook, SU students have set up groups designed for communicating interest in both selling and purchasing course textbooks. Appendix II shows examples of student posts in the Syracuse University Facebook group “Textbook Exchange.”

At Syracuse University, student complaints regarding textbook costs are abundant. The university newspaper, *The Daily Orange*, has published multiple

articles regarding the need for cheaper textbooks. On Feb. 10, 2014, the paper's editorial column opens with: "Textbooks need to be less expensive" ("Textbook alternatives," 2014, para. 1). Another *Daily Orange* editorial calls for a greater distinction between required textbooks and recommended textbooks by using student evaluations to prevent the purchase of "superfluous class materials." The article defines a required textbook as a book that "students will be tested on the material or will need to complete homework from it" ("SU should use," 2013, para. 3&4). See Appendix III for a copy of the *Daily Orange* articles.

In a 2013 survey of Syracuse University students by the student organization Undergraduates for Better Education, students expressed concerns about textbook requirements (see Appendix IV). Overall, the comments expressed by the students indicate a highly negative sentiment towards textbook costs. Students respond positively to courses that do not require any purchases whatsoever. The following students were asked to comment on any courses where they were not required to purchase any course materials:

- "I loved it, I could read them whenever I had time in between classes on my phone and just wherever I was with my laptop or phone, I didn't have to worry about carrying heavy textbooks around. I usually read them on my laptop or phone. Also they're great to refresh you memory quick before a quiz when you're waiting for class to start. I would prefer all classes do this in order to save money and convenience" (Allana Gauzza, personal communication, January 5, 2014).

- "I definitely preferred having the materials on Blackboard as opposed to having a textbook. Economical and convenient. If it was a long reading I'd print it out but usually I just read them right from Blackboard and saved them all to a folder for easy access." (Lauryn Botterman, personal communication, January 5, 2014)
- "For PHI 107, all of our readings were on Blackboard so we had no textbook to buy. I liked it because I didn't have to pay for it but hated it because I hate reading online and had to print the readings" (Peri Karslioglu, personal communication, January 5, 2014).
- "MAX 123, 132, 201 all post on Blackboard which is why I invested in an iPad. I really like it because it's easy to have all of my readings in one place" (Tory Savage, personal communication, January 5, 2014)

Faculty

As required by the Office of the Provost, within a course syllabus an instructor must include "required course materials or electronic access: texts, supplies, reserve materials at library, course reference lists and locations where they can be found, access to Blackboard or other web-based course site/support" ("Syllabus Inventory," 2013, para. 3).

Faculty can submit textbook information to the SU Bookstore online ensuring the proper materials are ordered. Faculty members at Syracuse

University are free to decide which materials to use in their courses. Some instructors have acknowledged that required course materials can entail a high cost for students and have already adopted textbook alternatives for their courses. Professors at Syracuse currently employ a variety of approaches to required course materials. The following cases show some examples of what instructors at Syracuse are doing.

- **Kristi Andersen, MAX 123: Critical Issues of the United States**

The instructors for MAX 123 eliminated the need for students to purchase any materials for the course; all required readings are now posted on Blackboard.

In 1995, there was a textbook designed specifically for the course, which eventually became a reader and a few books, then just a course reader, finally evolving to all online materials. Professor Andersen, the lead instructor of the course, says that students were not being assigned enough reading within the books to make it worth the cost of their purchase. The course reader they designed for the course cost students \$175 because of issues with copyright, printing, and receiving permissions from the publisher, and students were unable to sell this course reader back to the SU Bookstore because the contents changed by semester. By Fall 2011, all of the course materials were made available on Blackboard, Syracuse University's course management system. Andersen says that prior to switching to all online materials, there was a discussion with students in the course to gather their opinions. Students in the course are comfortable doing almost everything online. Students

acknowledge that they are spending less money, even if they choose to print all of the materials (Kristi Andersen, personal communication, May 1, 2013).

- **Lisa Knych, LPP 255: Introduction to the Legal System**

Lisa Knych offers her students several options to obtain their course textbook. The textbook that she requires for the course, West's Business Law (12th edition), sells new for \$271.49 in hardcover and is not available at the school bookstore. Considering the cost of textbooks for students, Knych offers several other options for students to obtain the textbook information. There is a copy of the book on reserve in Bird Library at Syracuse University for students to check out two hours at a time. Students also have the option of purchasing an e-book for 50% off the list price, or electronically per chapter (\$5.00). Knych only uses nine of the 52 chapters within the textbook for her course. The book can also be rented directly from the publisher, Cengage. The last option Knych offers is a custom-produced version of the textbook including only the nine chapters for her class. Working with the publisher, she negotiated the price for \$124.99 (Lisa Knych, personal communication, October 17, 2013).

- **Jacob Bendix, GEO 155: The Natural Environment**

Bedix does not require students in his GEO 155 course to purchase a textbook for the course. Bendix says that he “felt awful requiring students to spend so much money on a book that [he] felt would have a limited impact on how well

they do in the course.” The recommended course textbook, *Physical Geography: The Global Environment*, retails at \$99. Teaching the course for many years, Bendix has figured out the best way for him to teach the topics and the explanations for teaching the material. There is not a textbook that presents materials in a similar manner. When comparing exam grades to semesters with a required textbook, he has seen little variation in average student performance. (Jacob Bendix, personal communication, March 28, 2014).

- **Jason Wiles, BIO 121: General Biology I and BIO 123: General Biology II**

Jason Wiles teaches the General Biology sequence, requiring the same textbook for both sections. The sequence textbook is a customized loose-leaf version of *Campbell* published by Pearson, the industry standard for introductory biology. Wiles describes the customization as, “identical in every way to the general text, with the exception of additional front matter specific to Syracuse University and research opportunities available to undergraduates with our own faculty.” Access to the homework website *Mastering Biology*, is included with the custom at the SU Bookstore for \$170. Students can purchase access to *Mastering Biology*, which comes with an electronic version of *Campbell* for \$130 at the SU Bookstore or \$110 from the publisher. He posts any additional course materials, including laboratory documents, to Blackboard. Laboratory work and *Mastering Biology* homework correspond

with textbook chapters and topics ensuring weekly student engagement with the textbook (Jason Wiles, personal communication, March 28, 2014).

Bookstore

The SU Bookstore is the only remaining bookstore on the Syracuse University campus. Follett's Orange Bookstore closed in February 2012 because of competition from the SU Bookstore and online retailers, late orders from faculty, and course readers ("Bookstore Closing," 2012). Now, the SU Bookstore has a monopoly on campus, making it the only location students can go to immediately purchase textbooks. Also, course readers compiled by professors are only available for purchase at the SU Bookstore.

The SU Bookstore offers several options for students seeking to reduce their personal costs for textbooks. Prior to the beginning of the semester, the SU Bookstore posts textbook information online at bookweb.syr.edu, a web platform that allows students to search for books by class and section. After selecting the desired courses, students are directed to a page displaying all textbook information that faculty members have ordered. Online students can immediately buy both new and used version of textbooks. According to the SU Bookstore website, students opting to purchase a used textbook can expect to save 25% off of the new retail value. For highly enrolled course, the SU Bookstore offers a textbook rental program. Students may choose to rent their textbook for the semester and can expect to save up to 75% off of the new retail value. In some

cases, the SU Bookstore offers a buyback guarantee of 50% for textbooks that will be used again the following semester.

At the conclusion of the semester, the SU Bookstore will pay students up to 50% of the textbook's current price for textbooks that faculty have requested for the next semester. They limit buyback to order demand by faculty and textbooks in reusable condition. Textbooks containing notes and highlighting are considered for buyback. The bookstore buys textbooks back with a high national demand at 15-40% of the current price to ship to wholesalers. Tech-savvy students can download "Sell Books Syracuse," a free smartphone app that provides a buyback estimate. The app allows students to scan their textbook's barcode and receive an instant price quote anywhere on their mobile device. The SU Bookstore also manages a student-to-student textbook exchange, Books2Bucks. Here students can post textbooks that they want to sell, and interested buyers can purchase the book directly from the book's owner.

Recommendations for Syracuse University Faculty

Instructors should review and begin implementing textbook alternatives to reduce student costs because of negative student sentiment and the 3.6% increase in tuition at Syracuse University planned for the 2014-15 school year. There are many textbook alternatives for faculty members to consider when deciding on course material. Approaches to reduce student costs differ in quality, long-term sustainability, student cost-savings, and the ease of instructor implementation. An assessment of faculty perceptions by the Center for Higher Education Studies

shows that faculty members desire multiple options for selecting course materials and a “one-size-fits-all” policy is not a viable solution (Harley et al., 2009). While discussing the research study, faculty at Syracuse acknowledged a willingness to consider and adopt cost-saving textbook alternatives. Based on this research study on alternative textbook approaches, it is recommended that faculty at Syracuse University should take the following actions to reduce student spending on required course materials:

- 1) In general, all faculty members should
 - a. make themselves aware of the effects of high textbook prices on students,
 - b. become knowledgeable about alternative options for selecting course materials, and
 - c. allow students to use previous editions of a textbook as long as the general content remains the same; students will have to make arrangements to compare old editions with the new edition for class assignments.
- 2) For introductory-level and highly enrolled courses, instructors should adopt or create open textbooks. Particularly, Rice University’s OpenStax textbooks should be considered, as it is the most notable open textbook program. Students would have the option to view online, order a print copy for a small fee, or purchase a copy on iTunes viewable on Apple devices. Faculty can customize any OpenStax textbook to tailor the content to their syllabus; they may even add their own material.

- a. Open textbooks decrease student cost to zero out-of-pocket expenses, with the exception of the student choosing to print-on-demand.
 - b. Peer-reviewed open textbooks can be of relatively high quality. Open Copyright allows content to be updated and adjusted as necessary to fit the needs of the course.
 - c. Instructors must be willing to take the time to either create or find a suitable open textbook, Appendix I provides a list of reputable open textbook providers. When creating an open textbook, an instructor must ensure that the information is routinely updated.
- 3) Upper division and topically specialized courses should replace course readers with academic journal articles available in the library linking them to Blackboard whenever possible. Faculty can work with the Copyright and Information Policy Office to determine the fair-use parameters for the desired material.
- a. Students see immediate cost relief, as all materials available online are included with their tuition. Students may incur some printing costs, depending on their print-on-demand preferences.
 - b. Instructors must actively seek and post articles to keep the material relevant. Instructors must update the information on a semester basis, as content changes, and ensure that proper copyright protocol is followed

While this report focuses on faculty's ability to reduce student costs, initial research shows that universities can also have an impact. Some recommended university-wide policies to reduce student costs are as follows:

- *Include required course materials in tuition cost*

Some universities are beginning to include textbooks in tuition and fee charges. This ensures that every student has access to course materials from day one and helps students afford textbooks by taking advantage of the university's buying power to reduce individual costs (Walters, 2012). Large universities negotiating with publishers may save students 65% off the retail price of a textbook (Stielow & Uzwysyn, 2011). Indiana University, the first institution to implement this strategy, requires students to purchase e-textbooks by charging students a course materials fee in 22 courses at the university. In return, students receive access to an e-textbook for the duration of their enrollment at Indiana University. The cost to students is around 20 percent off the e-textbook price, and students maintain access to the e-textbook significantly longer than with other e-textbook licenses (Young, 2011).

- *Enforce the recommended policies in this report*

Syracuse University could mandate instructors to follow these suggestions. Without a policy change at the administrative level, there is no way to enforce faculty to consider alternative options.

- *Facilitate the creation of open textbooks*

In addition to Rice University's OpenStax College, several other colleges and universities are seeking to create their own open textbook programs (see Appendix I). The main motivation behind creating these programs is notoriety in the academic community for the faculty members creating the textbooks. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has been influential in the development of open textbook programs, providing grants to several universities to create open textbooks.

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Appendices

Appendix I	Faculty Resources
Appendix II	Posts in “Textbook Exchange,” a SU Facebook Group
Appendix III	Daily Orange Articles
Appendix IV	UBE Survey Responses Regarding Textbook Use

Appendix I:

Faculty Resources

Custom Textbook and Course Reader companies:

- AcademicPub.com
- Dynamicbooks.com
- Flatworldknowledge.com
- McGraw-Hill Create, create.mcgraw-hill.com
- Pearson Project Blue Sky, pearsonbluesky.com
- Study.net

Open Textbook Resources:

- BC Campus OpenEd, open.bccampus.ca
- California Learning Resource Network Digital Textbook Initiative, <http://www.clrn.org/fdti/>
- Community College Consortium for Open Educational Resources, <http://oerconsortium.org/discipline-specific/>
- College Open Textbooks, <http://www.collegeopentextbooks.org/>
- Florida's Digital Repository The Orange Grove, <http://florida.theorangegrove.org/og/access/home.do>
- InTech, <http://www.intechopen.com>
- Merlot, <http://www.merlot.org/merlot/viewPortfolio.htm?id=334314>
- Rice Universities Openstax College, <https://openstaxcollege.org/>
- State University of New York libraries' Open SUNY Textbooks, <http://opensuny.org/omp/index.php/SUNYOpenTextbooks/catalog>
- The State of Washington's Open Course Libraries, <http://opencourselibrary.org>
- The University System of Maryland's Open Source Textbooks Initiative, <http://libguides.umuc.edu/content.php?pid=98930&sid=742391>
- University of Minnesota's Open Textbook Library, <http://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/>

Appendix II:

Posts in Syracuse University Facebook Group “Textbook Exchange”



Heather Chang

FRE 101 workbook and CDs – \$30
PSY 382 textbook – \$50
ADV 206 – \$30
PSY 252 textbook – \$90
COM 117 textbook and Bare Bones – \$25

Prices negotiable! Message me :o)

Like · Share · January 19 at 10:38pm near Syracuse, NY



Page Garbee

Selling PSY 205 with disk and some super helpful highlighting.



Like · Share · January 15 at 12:30pm

Subash Acharya likes this.



Subash Acharya r u still selling?

January 15 at 10:04pm · Like



Fredrick Cho

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Source: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/345585458832882/>

Appendix III: Daily Orange Articles

4 FEBRUARY 30, 2014

DAILYORANGE.COM
OPINION@DAILYORANGE.COM

EDITORIAL | BY THE DAILY ORANGE EDITORIAL BOARD

Textbook alternatives should focus on online books, cutting prices

Textbooks need to be less expensive. Moving them online will make prices more affordable for students. If prices are more affordable, then students will be more willing to purchase all of their textbooks.

According to a U.S. PIRG study released last week, almost two-thirds of students did not buy a textbook at some point during college because of the cost of the book. This is why, in November, Senators Dick Durbin (D-ILL.) and Al Franken (D-MN) introduced the Affordable College Textbook Act. The act would create a competitive grant program for institutions of higher education to create and expand the use of "open" textbooks online.

Textbook distributors are also looking

to address the issue. Follett, a company that manages more than 950 campus stores, started a program called Included in January 2013, which enrolls students in classes and orders textbooks simultaneously. This ensures that students have their textbooks as soon as classes begin.

Both initiatives reflect two pressing realities — textbooks are too expensive and some students are not getting all the proper materials they need to do well in certain classes.

The senate act offers an alternative where textbooks are made available either as e-books or online. This initiative would make textbooks less expensive and, in turn, help prevent students from bypassing a book

because of a high price.

The Follett program could help make sure students do not have trouble buying their textbooks before classes begin. But it is unfair to force students to buy textbooks when enrolling in a class. Some professors inform students on the first day that a listed textbook is not part of the curriculum. Some students enroll in classes that they will later drop.

The price of books can be reduced when they are purchased electronically because publishers eliminate printing expenses. Higher education institutions should offer more textbooks electronically or on the Internet through programs like Blackboard to reduce costs for students.

While some alternatives to traditional textbooks are being proposed, they must be refined before an effective solution to cutting costs can be implemented.

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- Keep an eye out for tomorrow's editorial topic by following @dailyorange

EDITORIAL

SU should use student feedback to ease textbook costs on campus

By The Daily Orange
Editorial Board

7 months ago



Show Top Sites

As textbooks become more expensive, Syracuse University officials should come up with strategies to ease the costs for students.

Between 2002 and 2012, textbook prices rose 6 percent each year, according to a June report published by the Government Accountability Office. This is yet another financial burden with which college students must deal.

To mitigate rising fees and help students afford these educational supplements, SU faculty and staff members should critically assess how essential each textbook is to its respective course.

In addition, there needs to be a clear distinction between the purpose of a recommended textbook and a required textbook. While a recommended textbook in one class might help a student better understand course material, it might be an unnecessary financial burden for others.

A textbook should be considered required if students will be tested on the material or will need to complete homework from it.

Faculty should draw a line between these two types of textbooks. They should also inform students weeks before the semester begins which textbooks will play an essential part in grasping the course's concepts.

To determine whether textbooks should be required or recommended, the various departments should consult students who have taken the classes.

Engaging them through end-of-semester class evaluations could provide evidence to determine how necessary certain textbooks are in specific courses. These evaluations would give students the opportunity to rate both their professor's performance, and also the importance and value of the textbooks. This could prevent future purchases of potentially superfluous class materials.

The questions within these evaluations would ask how much a student used the textbook and if it should continue to be used in the class. This could determine whether a textbook should be required or recommended based on how often students used them, were tested on their content or referred to them to complete homework.

This may not result in the removal of the textbook altogether, but it would provide insight into the necessity of the text in a specific course.

While the university cannot change the publishing industry's mounting price of textbooks, it can make students' lives easier by looking into how essential certain texts actually are in the classroom environment.

This could save students from yet another financial burden in higher education.

Published on August 28, 2013 at 2:56 am

Appendix IV:

UBE Survey Responses Regarding Textbook Use

Please comment on your experiences with instruction:

- I have had some classes taught entirely by TA's (MAT) who's focus doesn't follow that of the exams. I've also had professors who simply do not seem to have a method of teaching, and rely on the student's own use of the textbook to teach them while only lightly covering the material
- Once had a professor that simply read off slides that he put online that directly matched the textbook reading. It was a lecture hall full of kids, and I'd say three quarters of us stopped coming to class.
- Some courses have great professors who care about the subject matter and are enthusiastic. However the majority of professors I've had were all about simply reading off the PowerPoint presentations and assigning reading. We learned everything from our textbooks. I wish most classes weren't graded based on just three tests all semester but more hands on learning activities and projects that would really make us understand the material and not our memory of a textbook and slides.
- I have had some classes taught entirely by TA's (MAT) who's focus doesn't follow that of the exams. I've also had professors who simply do not seem to have a method of teaching, and rely on the student's own use of the textbook to teach them while only lightly covering the material

What would you recommend the University do to improve undergraduate education?

- Lessen rental prices for books, evaluate all professors regardless of tenure, and increase racial diversity in professors.
- Less book focus, more hands on focus, more organization of class time
- Get more teachers and advisers that actually care about the future of their students. I ran into very few teachers who did so. Many of them just had one "claim to fame" from their past that they displayed constantly and rarely were able to get on the same page as the students. Meaning they would talk about themselves and what they had done, only read out of the textbook (many of which were completely useless), and not be able to relate the coursework to the real world.